

**Dolphin Health**

**Inspection Reports**

**Necropsy Reports**

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## Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)

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**From:** Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 1:15 PM  
**To:** L-Senior Managers  
**Subject:** dolphin issues

Taija has not been eating and we believe has regurgitated a couple of blood clots. We are going to close the stadium and get our hands on her today. Best guess at this point is a bleeding ulcer.

Kevin

Kevin Willis  
Director of Biological Programs  
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(p) 952 431 9272

## Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)

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**From:** Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 9:37 AM  
**To:** Ehmke, Lee (MNZOO)  
**Subject:** RE: Today

Lee,

A few things:

- 1) There have been no follow up calls today. If you want I could be at the Capital.
- 2) Nothing new on the necropsy. Below is yesterday's message from out Vets:
  - a. Ulcer between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chamber of stomach.
  - b. Large blood clot obstructing flow of ingesta/food through her GI tract.
  - c. No foreign body found.
  - d. Still investigating cause of ulcer. Unsure at this time.
- 3) We would like to keep the stadium closed again today – it's German day, there is no programming in the stadium for that event, and there are a lot of other things going on for students and regular guests. Although I'll keep saying it's day-to-day based on dolphin behavior, opening the stadium tomorrow makes sense at this point with presentations by the weekend.
- 4) Lots of supportive comments for Consortium Members.

Kevin

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**From:** Lee Ehmke  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 9:21 AM  
**To:** Kevin Willis  
**Cc:** Connie Braziel; Kelly Lessard  
**Subject:** Today

Kevin:

First of all, thank you for your professional, compassionate and articulate representation of the Zoo on the latest dolphin event (and all past ones as well). We are very lucky to be able to benefit from your expertise and your communications skills.

I expect I will be getting plenty of questions on dolphins at the Capitol this afternoon. Between your statements and Kelly's briefings, I believe I am all set to provide correct and consistent answers, but want to be sure I have all of the current information. In particular, anything new on the necropsy and subsequent testing, our current plans for DBay public re-opening and resumption of demonstrations, and any responses from third parties (AZA, Alliance etc.) would be helpful.

Thanks Kevin

Lee

Lee Ehmke  
Director / CEO  
Minnesota Zoo  
952 431-9299

## Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)

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**From:** Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2012 8:47 AM  
**To:** Diane Fusco  
**Subject:** RE: Alliance and consortium

Diane,

All is quiet after the flurry of reporting on Tuesday. I'd say our news was upstaged by the Republican caucus results.

Yes, tongues are wagging. Sr Mgrs Tuesday morning was no treat. What to do with D-Bay has been moved up a notch in priority in the Master Planning process - meetings on Master Planning are next week Thursday-Friday (were scheduled long ago, no connection to dolphins).

I already "gave away" the money allocated for you and Jim to attend the Consortium meeting this year because the meeting had been moved to our next fiscal year. As always I appreciate your willingness to pay your own way to meetings. Tom Ness has occasionally used money from his supply budget to send his staff to training - assuming we save a bit in fish over the next 5 months you may have some surplus there. I'll approve your travel regardless. It would be great to have you there, over the past few years I have been pulled away for Board stuff making it more difficult to focus on the Consortium (the Consortium meeting is my highest priority, but I pretty much miss all of the conversations outside of that meeting).

Will Sr Mgrs support our recommendations? My guess is more so than most Consortium members, but we need to be very careful what we ask for. I know Allie and Semo are not a good combination for Allie. Semo alone would be fine for Semo, but not fine with the USDA (or guests or Sr Mgrs). Swap Allie for a young male that Semo won't womp on? We could probably work that out with Brookfield, but Doug will want Semo breeding. I'd like to move Semo just once. Dr. Rachel asked me if anyone had called Clearwater to see if they would take Semo for "retirement." That suggestion was completely new to me.

I am very concerned about a number of things - at this point I'd feel much more comfortable talking than writing.

Kevin

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Diane Fusco  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2012 8:06 AM  
**To:** Kevin Willis  
**Subject:** Alliance and consortium  
**Importance:** High

Hi,

Hope everything is going ok and we aren't getting beat up to badly. Think we should start talking about our dolphin situation and ramifications asap - I'm sure tongues are wagging already. I think we agree this is not a good situation for the dolphins. How can that be improved and would that be in the zoo's best interest. Would senior management support a plan based on our recommendations? I don't think we can remain status quo. Ideally if funded maybe aspects of renovation could at least be started. Of course this also has ramifications on programming and staffing as well. How can we lessen some of the impacts? Have a few ideas. Know you're busy with budgets, I can be available anytime.

All this being said I would like to attend the alliance more importantly the consortium meeting in April. I will pay my way, arrive Sunday morn and leave Tues afternoon. Rita is also paying her way so we 'll share a room.

If ok would like to respond to attending the meeting to suggest sun or mon evening to meet.

Thanks,

Diane

## Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)

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**From:** Willis, Kevin (MNZOO)  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2012 4:07 PM  
**To:** Ehmke, Lee (MNZOO); Braziel, Connie (MNZOO); Lindsay, Melissa (MNZOO)  
**Subject:** RE: Long Term Dolphin Plans

Lee,

I think this is a good idea; however, the devil is in the details. I don't know the criteria you used to come to with your list of participants, but with one exception it seems like "the usual suspects" (although I would have put Ned in that category). Are their opinions to be considered representative of the general public? Of the Boards?

At a more basic level, is the question whether we can responsibly keep dolphins, or is the question whether anyone can responsibly keep dolphins? Or is that not the question at all? Maybe the question is: given that dolphins are going to die, can we stand the political and public heat in terms of maintaining a good reputation (and of course our attendance and donors)?

In terms of getting someone from outside "the family", that is a good idea as we are all close to this. In your suggestion of Tom Otten, I'm not sure to what he is considered "neutral." He is clearly in favor of having marine mammals in our facilities – that is his role (at least the part I know of) with the Navy through SAIC. Is he (or someone like him) neutral relative to our political climate? If the question is the latter from above, maybe we would be better off with a PR professional like Jill Alread.

As always, I will want to bring data to the conversation. I don't consider my opinion representative of any important sub-group (important relative to zoo attendance and donor goals), but I do think national surveys, life expectancy statistics, etc. are relevant and should be discussed.

Kevin

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**From:** Lee Ehmke  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2012 3:16 PM  
**To:** Kevin Willis; Connie Braziel; Melissa Lindsay  
**Subject:** Long Term Dolphin Plans

Given the unhappy confluence of dolphin mortality, master planning and capital investment requests, I feel the need for a high level discussion about our strategy for the future of Discovery Bay. The choices are clear: a major re-commitment to establishing a viable dolphin program; or development of an alternative use of Discovery Bay and an attendant messaging effort. I feel both too close and too conflicted on these questions to do this without strong guidance and support of our Boards.

Therefore, I'm suggesting establishment of a Board Task Force to be convened in the next few weeks. After conversation with Ken Cutler, we agreed to ask Todd Watchmaker to head this Task Force, and to keep the membership small. Todd is willing to do this, and we discussed inviting Ellie Crosby, Julic Kunkel, Barbara Ali, Cassy Ordway, Dick Vogel and Ken Cutler to participate. It may make sense to add a few others (your suggestions are solicited), but the group needs to stay small and focused.

I will work on developing a charter statement for the Task Force.

We need to identify who on staff should participate, and I would also like to bring in some “neutral” expertise from the outside, including perhaps someone like Tom Otten.

I will stick with the party line stance that the Asset Preservation funding we are requesting is necessary to maintain our “marine animal” facility. However, I worry about simply “kicking the can down the road” as it relates to the bigger strategic question. This will be a very tricky balancing act.

Sorry to send you off on vacation with this note Kevin, but it really is time to address this head on.

Lee Ehmke  
Director / CEO  
Minnesota Zoo  
952 431-9299

## Dolphins in Human Care

brief histories of relevant populations

## Dolphin Populations

- Minnesota Zoo
- Dolphin Consortium
- North America

## MZG Dolphin History



## The Dolphin Consortium Population

## Dolphin Consortium

- Consortium Members
  - Minnesota Zoo (MNZoo)
  - Brookfield Zoo (Brookfield)
  - National Aquarium in Baltimore (NAIB)
  - Indianapolis Zoo (Indy)
  - Disney's The Living Seas (Disney)
  - Texas State Aquarium (TSA)
  - The Dolphin Connection (DC)

## Dolphin Consortium

Consortium Members	Dolphins (M.F)
MN Zoo	1.1
Brookfield	2.5
NAIB	2.7
Indy	4.5
TSA	3.0
Disney	4.0
DC	5.0

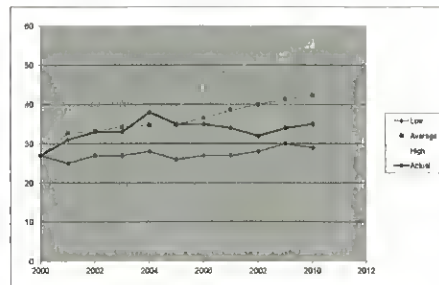


### Dolphin Consortium

- The Dolphin Consortium is not an AZA breeding program and does not follow those guidelines (ownership matters).
- The Dolphin Consortium has a written agreement that we will work cooperatively on dolphin breeding and transfers.
- I have been monitoring and modeling this population for the Consortium since 2000

### Model from 2000

With actual data added through December 2010



### Projections

- From 2000 until 2006 we had reliably attained or exceeded the number of births per year to meet projected population growth.
- No births in 2006, higher than expected calf mortality rate in 2009 and 2010.
- Baltimore, Brookfield and Indianapolis had all curtailed breeding at some period of time for pool work (or other reasons) since 2005.

### Projections

- MN Zoo, Brookfield, Indianapolis and Baltimore have been considered the breeding facilities. The other three facilities hold "extra" males.
- The Consortium needs us to be a breeding facility – particularly if Baltimore decides to not breed/maintain dolphins.

### The North American Population

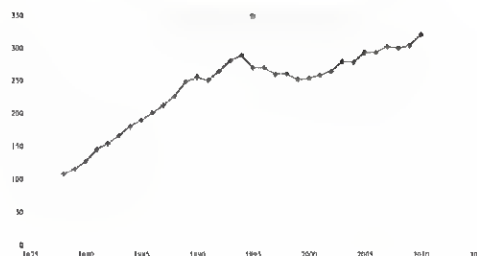
### The North American Population

- Sea World is single biggest holder.
- The US Navy is the second biggest holder in the U.S.
- Mexico has a number of large facilities with many dolphins, but their laws do not allow the import/export of dolphins.
- Sea World and 6 Flags of CA are two AZA, non-Consortium Members.

## The North American Population

- The following graph includes dolphins in the following countries:
  - U.S.
  - Bermuda
  - Bahamas

## Population Size



## Projection

- The data pre-1990 is a bit suspect – an underestimate based on a past data entry practice.
- This population has the capacity to continue to increase.
- Facilities in Mexico (not included) have nearly stopped breeding because they have run out of spaces and cannot export under current law.

## Other Marine Mammal Species

Species selected by the AZA Marine Mammal Advisory Group for cooperative management.

Species	2009 Holdings in AZA Facilities
CA Sea Lion	309
Grey Seal	25
Harbor Seal	161
Northern Fur Seal	13
Walrus	24
Beluga	34

## California Sea Lion

- From the most recent SSP Masterplan:
  - Deaths have outnumbered births for a number of years.
  - The population has been decreasing by about 2% per year for the past 10 years.
  - Almost 195 animals were considered non-breeders for various reasons (age, in shows, non-reproductive).

## California Sea Lion

- The population does have the potential to grow, but there is currently a considerable demand for animals.
- Many older animals in the population suggest the short-term trend will be a continued decrease, but longer-term growth can be positive.

### California Sea Lion

- Wild animals are available:
  - Non-Releaseable rehab animals
  - Adult males from Bonneville dam, OR
- These animals should not be considered “show” animals.

### MN Zoo Dolphin History

- Almost 30 years of dolphins at this institution with an initial investment of 3 animals made over 27 years ago, that is why we are one of the “have-not” facilities.
- Much has changed in those 27 years, you can no longer just buy another dolphin if one dies as we did in 1980.

### MZ Zoo Dolphin Future

- Although money may no longer change hands, ownership = control.
- We are in a very weak position – we own a single female (Spree).
- Once Spree is breeding we will own only one-third of her viable calves: we will remain in a weak position.

### MN Zoo Dolphin Future

- Our two options:
  - Remain members of a loose, informal and at times dysfunctional Consortium of facilities
  - Ask Sea World for another handout, but this time from a much weaker position.
- The two options are mutually exclusive: Consortium Members will manage a population of animals owned by Members.

### MN Zoo Dolphin Future

- Our only real option is to remain an active and helpful member of the Consortium.
- Our only real hope of keeping dolphins at this facility lies with the continued growth of the Consortium population.
- With 3 of 7 facilities willing/needing to hold all male groups, we will have an important role in breeding

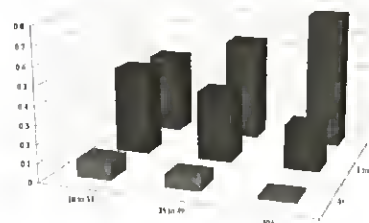
### 2011 Harris Poll Results

A summary of some relevant questions

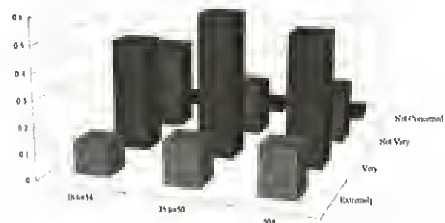
### Harris Poll

- Conducted in the summer of 2011
- Total sample size = 1011
  - Ages 18 – 34 242
  - Ages 35 to 50 253
  - Over 50 516

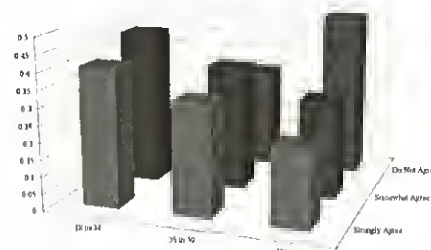
### Visits to an Aquarium/Marine Park in Last 12 Months by Age Group



### Concern for Protection of Marine Mammals

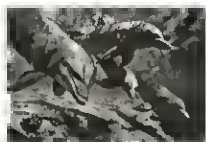
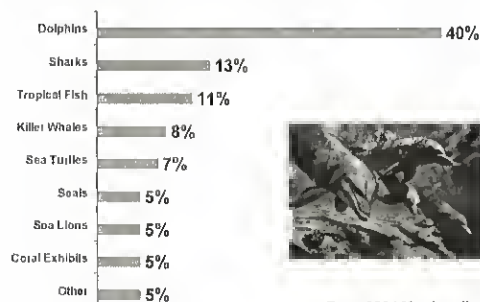


"I would be interested in swimming with dolphins in a safe, legal and permitted environment in a marine life park, aquarium or zoo."



### Aquarium Animal Exhibit Ranking

Q: Which one of the following exhibits would be your favorite to view if you were to visit an aquarium?



From 2004 Harris poll